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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 007493

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SUBJECT: FORMER SUDANESE FM ISMAIL ASSURES SUDAN ENVOY THAT
KHARTOUM STANDS BY ADDIS ABABA AGREEMENT

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah B. Rosenblatt. Reas
ons 1.4b,d

11. (C) Summary: Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios met with Bashir presidential advisor and former Sudanese FM Mustafa Osman Ismail in Paris on November 18. Natsios, who arrived from the Addis Ababa consultations on Darfur, sought an unambiguous public statement of GoS support for the Addis Ababa declaration, including the principle of a AU-UN hybrid force. He delivered a warning that the GoS must immediately end military involvement in recent atrocities in Darfur and Chad. Ismail had traveled from London to Paris for meetings on AU-UN efforts in Darfur with Special Adviser to the Secretary General Lakhdar Brahimi, DPKO U/SYG Jean-Marie

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Guehenno, and DPKO A/SYG Hedi Annabi. While Ismail stated his satisfaction with the Addis Ababa declaration, Natsios pointed out to him that Sudan's comments on the agreement since the meeting in Addis Ababa had not been positive; Ismail promised to work to improve those statements. Ismail hoped for swift progress after Addis Ababa to move beyond the deadlock over UNSCR 1706 and the mutual recriminations caused by the Security Council call for UN rehatting of AMIS. Ismail voiced support for Eritrean efforts to relaunch Darfur negotiations in Asmara, claiming only Eritrea appeared able to deliver all key rebel parties. He said the GoS was urging Eritrea to incorporate the international community in any talks. End Summary.

12. (C) Special Envoy for Sudan Andrew Natsios met on November 18 with former Sudanese FM Mustafa Osman Ismail, the putative lead for President Bashir on Darfur; AF/SE COS Andrew Steinfeld and Embassy Paris Africa Watcher (notetaker) also took part. Ismail assured SE Natsios of his overall satisfaction with the Addis Ababa consultations. The Government of Sudan (GoS) was "happy with all the articles" of the Addis Ababa agreement, Ismail declared. Asked by SE Natsios for a clear public GoS endorsement of the Addis Ababa agreement, Ismail claimed that he had given a positive statement to the English-language version of Al Jazeera. He promised to be in touch with Khartoum about a more formal GoS statement. Regarding reports that the GoS was backing off the agreement on a three-phased AU-UN hybrid operation, Ismail criticized SYG Annan for trumpeting the Addis Ababa agreement and Khartoum's supposed acquiescence before Khartoum itself had had an opportunity to make its own statement. In any event, he underscored GoS concurrence with the UN on the need for a preponderance of Africans in any Darfur force and on the need for broad UN assistance to the AU, including on logistics, finances, and civilian and

political expertise. Ismail said there was a need to move rapidly to build on the outcome of Addis Ababa. Notably, however, Ismail also said that, given the tough anti-UN position that the GoS had taken, it would be impossible to change that stance overnight.

13. (C) Asked about conflicting signals from the GoS regarding total force numbers, Ismail discounted the issue. More important than force size was maintaining a preponderance of Africans in the force composition. SE Natsios asked about the possible deployment of non-African troops in a support role, specifically a joint Norwegian-Swiss battalion of engineers. Ismail suggested a AU-UN-GoS trilateral commission should review such considerations. He called attention to the guidelines set forth in a 11/5 letter of GoS President Bashir. Non-African expertise was welcome, Ismail emphasized, so long as there were no compromises on the African character of the force. Such questions, he insisted, should be tackled quietly, away from the spotlight of television reporting.

14. (C) Ismail welcomed what he perceived as a shift to practical deliberations. He lamented the emphasis on SCR 1706 and UN rehatting as an apparent be all and end all. Ismail complained that he had met twice with A/S Frazer to appeal to no avail for delays in the push for SCR 1706; the first time to propose an alternative 6-month security plan encompassing expansion of the AU force and then later in order to request a one-week postponement before the adoption of SCR 1706. The Addis Ababa agreement and the visit by SE Natsios represented a chance to turn the page, an opportunity to restore trust within certain quarters of the GoS, Ismail added.

15. (C) Sudan needed the UN and the U.S., "whether in the South, whether in Darfur, for helping on security, but also

PARIS 00007493 002 OF 002

for rehabilitation and reconstruction." Sudan needed UN and U.S. help moreover in order to achieve a peaceful transition from military to civilian government. It was essential to take a fresh look at the U.S.-Sudan bilateral relationship. Lack of headway on the bilateral front would confirm Khartoum's suspicions about the U.S. President Bashir was upset that the signing of the CPA had only brought dividends for the SPLM. The signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja had similarly brought few benefits, Ismail claimed, and the U.S. had kept silent when non-signatories, notably Khalil Ibrahim, had forged coalitions to attack the GoS. SE Natsios replied that we were prepared to initiate sanctions against the JEM. Ismail commented on Khalil Ibrahim's ties to Libya, including fundraising from sympathizers. Zaghawa in Libya were providing USD one million each month, Ismail claimed. Asked by Natsios whether Ghadaffi were being helpful, Ismail replied that Libya could not be excluded from the negotiating process, if only because of its many Zaghawa migrants and the long shared border with Darfur.

16. (C) Ismail endorsed Eritrean efforts to organize comprehensive negotiations on Darfur. In Ismail's view, only the Eritreans claimed to be able to deliver attendance by all key rebel parties. (Note: SLM leader Abdulwahid El-Nur told SE Natsios later on November 18 that he would not attend meetings in Eritrea. He accused Eritrean authorities of attempted kidnapping and coercion. End Note.) AF/SE Steinfeld remarked that, in contrast to the Eritrean project, the Addis Ababa declaration foresaw continued AU stewardship of the peace process, in contrast to the Eritrean notion. SE Natsios observed that Eritrean President Isaias had multiple agendas, rejected USG involvement, and had taken the unprecedented step of ousting USAID from Eritrean territory. Ismail stated that Eritrea could not mediate successfully on Darfur without allowing for the participation of the international community. He said the GoS was trying to persuade the Eritreans to incorporate the USG, UN and AU. He appealed for Envoy Natsios to participate if Asmara meetings

took place, pleading that we give Eritrea a chance to be helpful.

¶7. (C) Ismail summarized his vision of a roadmap for progress on Darfur: 1) Agreement on the modalities of an AU-UN force; 2) Get DPA non-signatories back to the negotiating table through the signature of an additional protocol, seizing the opportunity of Asmara and approaching SLM Fur leader Abdulwahid El-Nur through dialogue not pressure; 3) Persuade Chad that its only hope for sustainable domestic peace was through a peaceful settlement in Darfur, and vice versa; 4) Galvanize the peace process in order to make headway in advance of the next election cycle in the U.S.

¶8. (C) SE Natsios repeatedly warned Ismail that the U.S. had evidence the GoS military had been involved in recent atrocities against non-combatants in Darfur and in Chad. If the GoS were reactivating Arab militia and intentionally targeting civilians, especially women and children, there would be grave repercussions. Ismail said he would convey the message to GoS President Bashir and that he would look into allegations of military involvement in the spree of renewed atrocities.

¶9. (U) AF/SE COS Steinfeld has cleared this report.

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